

**DECISION**

THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

60232

FILE: B-183536

DATE: NOV 28 1975

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MATTER OF: Mitchell R. Miller - Reimbursement for  
Transportation of Mobile Home

**DIGEST:**

Incident to transfer to Alaska, employee transported mobile home from Keyser, West Virginia, to Seattle, Washington, where it was determined that it did not meet Alaskan specifications. Employee stored trailer in Seattle and completed shipment of household goods to Alaska on Government Bill of Lading (GBL). Regarding reimbursement for transportation of mobile home, rule in 39 Comp. Gen. 40 (1954) is applicable. Credit should be allowed under FTR para. 2-7.3a for shipment of mobile home from Keyser to Seattle. Employee is not entitled to further allowance under authorization for shipment of household goods on GBL. Total payment under both authorizations may not exceed cost which would have been incurred by Government had either method been used for entire distance.

This action is in response to a request for an advance decision by Mr. M. E. Shields, Disbursing Officer, Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army. The request was forwarded by the Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Allowance Committee, which assigned it PDTATAC Control No. 75-10.

The record indicates that Mr. Mitchell R. Miller, an employee of the Corps of Engineers, was issued PCS Travel Order No. FY 75-723, dated October 17, 1974, authorizing his transfer from Keyser, West Virginia, to Fairbanks, Alaska. The orders authorized transportation of a mobile home from Keyser to Fairbanks for use as a residence. Prior to the shipment of the mobile home, Mr. Miller contacted the manufacturer of the mobile home in order to ascertain whether it met the specifications required by the state of Alaska for mobile homes. The manufacturer apparently assured Mr. Miller that the mobile home did meet such specifications. However, when the mobile home reached Seattle, Washington, it was denied shipment to Alaska on the basis that it did not meet Alaskan specifications.

Mr. Miller's travel orders were then amended canceling transportation of the mobile home from Seattle to Fairbanks and, in lieu thereof, authorizing transportation of household effects from Seattle to Fairbanks, in addition to authorizing 60 days temporary storage. His household

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effects were shipped on a Government Bill of Lading (GBL) from Seattle to Fairbanks. The mobile home was placed in storage in Seattle and Mr. Miller is now in the process of selling it.

The disbursing officer suggests that Mr. Miller is entitled to reimbursement for the transportation of his mobile home on the basis of the cost the Government would have incurred to move his household effects from his old duty station in Keyser to his new duty station in Fairbanks, less the value of the GBL issued to move his household effects from Seattle to Fairbanks. The Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Committee suggests that the rule in 39 Comp. Gen. 40 (1959) is for application. That decision stands for the principle that, quoting from the syllabus:

"While a travel authorization which would provide for the transportation of household effects, or in lieu thereof the transportation of a house trailer, would be within administrative discretion, only one method for the entire distance should be used rather than a combination of the two for different portions of the distance but, if because of conditions beyond the control of the employee and if acceptable to the administrative office the use of both methods is required, allowance under the separate authorization for the respective portions of the distance may be paid, but the total payment may not exceed the cost which would have been incurred had either of the methods been used for the entire distance."

The provisions pertaining to eligibility for transportation of an employee's mobile home are set out at Federal Travel Regulations (FMPR 101-7) para. 2-7.1a (May 1973), which provides:

"An employee who is entitled to transportation of his household goods under these regulations shall, in lieu of such transportation, be entitled to an allowance, as provided in this part, for the transportation of a mobile home for use as a residence. In order to be eligible for the allowance, the employee shall certify in a manner prescribed by the head of the agency that the mobile home is for use as a residence for the employee and/or his immediate family at the destination. If an employee is not eligible to receive an allowance for movement of his mobile home, he may be eligible

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to receive an allowance based on the transportation of his household goods under the provisions of 2-8."

With respect to the required certification of use as a residence we note that the file does not contain such a certification. We assume that Mr. Miller has properly completed one since he was authorized transportation of his mobile home. Furthermore, Mr. Miller did not utilize the mobile home as a residence at his new duty station. However, we are of the opinion that this does not defeat his entitlement under the circumstances presented by this case.

We have previously ruled in similar cases that, absent any negligence or intentional wrongdoing on the part of an employee to subvert his certification of use as a residence, we would not object to reimbursement of transportation of a mobile home. B-168123, December 9, 1969. In that case the employee was prevented from utilizing the mobile home as a residence due to its being damaged in transit. In the instant case, the employee's inability to utilize the mobile home as a residence was also due to circumstances beyond his control and not due to negligence. Here, despite Mr. Miller's attempts to ensure that his mobile home would meet Alaskan specifications, the mobile home was not permitted to enter Alaska because it did not meet the specifications establishing minimum standards for suitability for Alaskan conditions.

Regarding the computation of allowable expenses for transportation of Mr. Miller's mobile home, we stated in 39 Comp. Gen. 40, supra, that where two authorizations are used for different portions of the trip the "allowance under the separate authorizations for the respective portions may be made in accordance with the applicable regulations." We added that "[t]he total payment in such cases should not exceed the cost which would have been incurred by the Government had either of the authorities been used for the entire distance." 39 Comp. Gen. 40, 42.

We agree with the Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Committee that the above rule is applicable in this case. Therefore, the computation of Mr. Miller's entitlement under the authorization by which his mobile home was transported from Keyser, West Virginia, to Seattle, Washington, should be made in accordance with FTR para. 2-7.3a. Accordingly, Mr. Miller's entitlement is limited to the cost of transporting his mobile home by commercial carrier from Keyser to Seattle.

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Since a GBL was issued for the transportation of his household goods from Seattle to Fairbanks, Mr. Miller is not entitled to any further allowance with regard to that portion of the shipment. However, the total payment for both portions of the transportation may not exceed the cost which would have been incurred by the Government had either of the methods been used for the entire distance.

Although the voucher accompanying the submission contains other items for reimbursement, including subsistence while occupying temporary quarters and miscellaneous expense, we are not ruling on those portions of the voucher since no legal questions were presented with regard thereto.

The voucher with supporting documents is returned and should be processed in accordance with the above.

PAUL G. DEMELING

Acting Comptroller General  
of the United States